



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Promotion of Agricultural Cooperative Through Trade Fairs in Enugu State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the promotion of agricultural cooperatives through trade fairs in Enugu State of Nigeria. other specific objectives are to; i. Ascertain the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair. ii. Determine the sources of producing the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair. A descriptive research survey was adopted for the study. The study employed both primary and secondary. The sample size was obtained using Taro Yamane statistical tools. The data collected were analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23), inferential statistics of linear regression. The study revealed that trade fairs affect the sales generation of agricultural products with a .761 value indicating a positive significance between trade fairs and sales generation of best quality product of agricultural cooperative products which is statistically significant (with $t = 18.567$) and $p = .000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted accordingly. Also, the extent to which agricultural products with a .916 value indicate a positive significance between trade fairs and sources of the best quality agricultural products which is statistically significant (with $t = 36.204$) and $p = .000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted accordingly.

Keywords: Agricultural Cooperative Products; Trade Fairs; Enugu and Nigeria

Introduction

Globally, every organization is committed to promoting its activity, product or services. The need to increase services or product awareness among organizations brought the need for a promotional strategy. Organizing trade fairs to expose goods and services offered by manufacturers and members of the intermediaries otherwise known as the middlemen has become very germane (Li and Ling-yee, 2006). A trade fair is a form of promotional device that enables companies to showcase and demonstrate their products to both middlemen and ultimate consumers. LeMare (2008) opines that the trade fair is an excellent means of surmounting communication barriers through demonstrations. Trade fairs are a method of bringing buyers and sellers together under mutually (equal) benefits, while exhibitions and books are featured at trade fairs which are designed to attract immediate prospects and to create awareness. A trade fair (trade show, trade exhibition) is an exhibition organized so that companies in a specific industry can showcase and demonstrate their latest products, and services, study activities of rivals and examine recent market trends and opportunities. In contrast to consumer fairs, only some trade fairs are open to the public, while others can only be attended by company representatives (members of the trade, e.g.,

professionals) and members of the press (Chu & Chiu, 2013). People participating in trade fairs have the privilege to physically examine, make comparisons and learn about new products, market movement, competition and new sources. This trade fair is usually designed for special groups in a particular geographical area (as made in Nigeria trade fair), Enugu Chamber of Commerce Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ECCIMA 2006). Individuals who participate in this fair are always interested and inquisitive about the new trend in a particular field and probably may want to know whether there is any slight change in product. Then when the trade fair/exhibitions are well publicized, managed, and staffed the result is an increased sales volume for exhibitors. Exhibition staff staffing is considered to be the most essential factor, because it is these staff who will attend to the customers, by informing, educating and persuading them to try or use their newly introduced products.

Statement of the Problem

The trade fair is an instrument for increasing marketing performance and its role in the promotion of locally manufactured goods to the consumer and the companies need not be over-emphasized. The goals of trade fairs are not usually achieved. This starts from the fact that it takes a lot of time to search out the stand of the best quality product from the producer of goods because these stands to locate the best quality in the trade fair are not always strategically located. Also, to find out the source of producing the best quality product from the promotion of agricultural Cooperatives. The place is highly overcrowded and most often, consumers cannot stand for a long time struggling to get to a stand of a seller or producer.

The Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the promotion of agricultural cooperatives through trade fairs in the Enugu State of Nigeria. other specifics objectives are to;

- I. Ascertain the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.
- II. Determine the sources of producing the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.

Research Hypotheses

- I. The best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products has no significant positive effect on trade fairs.
- II. Sources of producing the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products have no significant positive effect on trade fairs.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Concept of Cooperative

Generally, a cooperative may be viewed as a self-help organization. A Cooperative is defined as an association of persons who pool their resources together on a mutual basis to solve specific socio-economic problems, which may include income-generating activities, Bibby and Shaw (2005). In the opinion of Onyeze, Ebue & Ike (2014), cooperatives have joint action by the group towards the attainment of the group's goals through the economic betterment of their members and mutual help. According to UFI (2013), a trade fair is defined as a market event where a large number of companies come and present their main product range of one or more industry sectors. Trade fairs are events of specific duration that are held at intervals and mostly attract trade and business visitors. In addition, Birchall (2003), defined a trade fair as a facilitating marketing event in the form of an exposition, fair, exhibition or mart; which takes place at periodically recurring intervals, ranging from quarterly to triennially; having pre-established hours of operation during a period lasting between one day and several weeks; whose primary objective is to disseminate information about, and display the goods and services of competing and complementary sellers who have rented specifically allocated and demarcated areas or "booths", clustered within a particular building(s), or bounded grounds; and whose audience is a selected concentration of customers, potential buyers, decision influencers, and middlemen.

Roles of Cooperatives

Adefila (2011). opine that, Cooperatives, as economic enterprises and as self-help organizations, play a meaningful role in uplifting the socio-economic conditions of their members and their local communities. Over the years, cooperative enterprises have successfully operated locally owned people-centred businesses while also serving as catalysts for social organization and cohesion. With their concern for their members and communities, they represent a model of economic enterprise that places high regard for democratic and human values and respect for the environment. They added that as the world today faces unstable financial systems, increased insecurity of food supply, growing inequality worldwide, rapid climate change and increased environmental degradation, it is increasingly compelling to consider the model of economic enterprise that cooperatives offer. The cooperative

sector, especially in developing countries, also presents itself as an important element that can contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 as asserted by Birchall (2003).

Agricultural Cooperatives

Birchall (2003) asserted that the most successful type of cooperative, measured by market share, is the agricultural cooperative. Ever since the industrial revolution turned them into producers of food for distant markets rather than just for local consumption, farmers have needed to take control over three processes: farm inputs (such as fertilizers, seeds and livestock); marketing of the produce; and food processing to add value to the product. They have also needed a supply of credit, to smooth out the seasonal variability in farm incomes. He stated that without a strong membership organization to meet their needs, farmers are reliant on intermediaries, merchants who often find it easy to exploit them (particularly when they supply credit in exchange for produce or have control over transport systems). Agriculture in the post-independent years was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy but suffered serious neglect due to the oil boom in the 1970s (Toluwase & Apata 2013). Agricultural production which then contributed about 80% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined to less than 3% in the 1990's and 2000's. To redirect the situation, multitudes of programmes were initiated which were not able to meet the objective they were designed to achieve. This scenario was further constrained by the nation's agricultural sector which is characterized by small farm holdings (Olayide, 1980). He stated further that the peasant farmers produce over 90% of the food crop grown in Nigeria using traditional methods coupled with obsolete farming implements. Olayemi et al. (1980) opined that structural transformation of the present agricultural economy is inevitable for Nigeria to be food secured in future. This needed transformation could only be achieved through virile extension services because of its vital link between research stations and farmers.

Trade Fair

Trade fairs provided a significant opportunity for companies to market their products globally. It had been a conduit for countries to export their products, services and technology (UFI, n.d). According to them, trade fairs are business-to-business shows that are accessible to numerous visitors. Trade fairs "are considered a most efficient means to obtain visibility in the global market and attract business partners, foreign investments and transfer of know-how for sectoral development." (International Trade Centre, 2012). Nevertheless, the trade fair is organised purely for commercial purposes, it enhances technological innovation in terms of the introduction of new products, services as well as new production processes. Trade fairs are the oldest trade promotion instruments known to man. The main features responsible for the success of trade fairs throughout the centuries have remained more or less the same regardless of whether the fair took place a hundred years ago. A trade fair is a form of promotional tool. It is an aspect of marketing communications strategy. Situma (2012) believes this and states thus: "Trade shows at their most effective could be important marketing tools for business. They were vital parts of the marketing mix as they combined the mass-reach of advertising, the targeting of direct mail, direct selling and the networking benefits of the internet." Kellezi (2013) assents to this when he noted that many companies have integrated trade fairs into their marketing communications mix. AUMA (2013) highlights the function of a trade fair to include the economic functions-presentation of new products and services, a platform for founders of new businesses, improvement of a company's image and media exposition, benchmarking, recruitment of employees and motivation, personal communications, and emotional approach. The macro-economic functions include- economic promotion, market formation and cultivation, creation of transparent markets and platforms for export. The social functions are-knowledge transfer, integrating business and politics and international understanding and relations. The trade fair is an integral part of sales promotion and one of the promotional mixes which have been employed by companies and businesses to create awareness of their goods and services. Kotler (2007) opines that promotion is one of the elements of the marketing mix and is a term used frequently in marketing. The marketing mix includes the four Ps: price, product, promotion, and place. Promotion refers to raising customer awareness of a product or brand, generating sales, and creating brand loyalty.

Theoretical Review

Trade Promotion Theory

Trade promotion theory by Gedenk (1999), is all about giving the customer something extra, rewarding them for their behaviour on this particular purchasing occasion. There are several theories which support the concept of reward as a motivator. The conditions of sales promotion are classical and operant conditioning. Whereas classical conditioning is largely associated with advertising operant conditioning is seen as an explanation for consumer behaviour about sales promotion. Operant conditioning suggests the response of the individual is likely to be

affected by positive reinforcement (reward) or negative reinforcement (punishment), although the effect is likely to cease when these reinforcements are taken away. Edward Thorndike suggested that the 'law of effect', which had to do with positive and negative consequences of actions, is also relevant to sales promotion. The law states that the consequences of behaviour now will govern the consequences of that behaviour in the future. In other words, once a buying pattern is achieved it will continue. The researcher anchored the work on push promotion theory and pull promotion theory as they both suggest what will be done to promote the publicity of goods and services to the members of the public using means economically and legally acceptable. These theories are here discussed below:

The Push Theory

As propounded by Gedenk (1999), trade promotion theory supports that you promote your goods to a retailer, who will then pass the wares along to their consumers. A "push" promotional strategy makes use of a company's sales force and trade promotion activities to create consumer demand for a product. The producer promotes the product to wholesalers, the wholesalers promote it to retailers, and the retailers promote it to consumers. A good example of "push" selling is mobile phones, where the major handset manufacturers such as Nokia promote their products via retailers such as Car Phone Warehouse. Personal selling and trade promotions are often the most effective promotional tools for companies such as Nokia -for example, offering subsidies on the handsets to encourage retailers to sell higher volumes. A "push" strategy tries to sell directly to the consumer, bypassing other distribution channels (e.g., selling insurance or holidays directly). With this type of strategy, consumer promotions and advertising are the most likely promotional tools.

The Pull Theory

This varies by focusing on the consumer himself. Go directly to the source to introduce your goods, and encourage a direct purchase (Mulhern, 1991). A "pull" selling strategy requires high spending on advertising and consumer promotion to build up consumer demand for a product. If the strategy is successful, consumers will ask their retailers for the product, the retailers will ask the wholesalers, and the wholesalers will ask the producers. A good example of a pull is the heavy advertising and promotion of children's toys – mainly on television.

Empirical Review

Rilla and Kara (2014) conducted a study on trade fairs' role as part of the firms' marketing communication: an integrated trade fair participation process. to determine the participation process Data for this study was gathered from qualitative semi-structured interviews. Twenty-one firms were interviewed by top management-level executives representing different fields of business for this study. The companies and the executives were chosen from the client base of the Finnish Fair Corporation. The data analysis followed the principles of Straussian grounded theory where analytic coding was used. The grounded theory method was suitable for getting insights into the role of fairs as part of the firm's marketing communications now and in the future, and more knowledge about the overall fair participation process to elaborate the theory. The interviewees were given latitude to express their opinions freely and spontaneously. The theoretical framework was built from the researcher's collection and analysis of data through the researcher's perception and past work experiences to increase understanding of the phenomenon and give a guide to action. The results indicate that trade fairs have a significant role in the firms' marketing mix. Kellezi (2014) carried out research on the objectives for successfully participating in trade shows. Telephone surveys of around 400 marketing decision-makers have been conducted every year since 2004. For analysing the data, bivariate longitudinal comparisons with *t*-tests on significance were used as well as a correlation analysis with Spearman's Rho. The results indicate that trade shows are suitable primarily as an instrument to nurture confidence in brands and to sustain customer loyalty, but less as an instrument to increase awareness levels. To improve the effectiveness of trade shows, complementary objectives should be targeted simultaneously. Birchall J, (2003) researched the role of cooperative business models for the success of smallholder coffee certification in Nicaragua: A comparison of conventional, organic and Organic-Fairtrade certified cooperatives. The research aims to identify similarities and differences between conventional and certified cooperatives and the resultant impact on farmers' incomes. We analyse the business models, upgrading strategies, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of seven conventional, organic and Organic-Fair trade certified coffee cooperatives and link these to members' coffee gross margins. Data used were gotten from over 100 in-depth qualitative interviews and a household survey of 327 cooperative members in northern Nicaragua. Results indicate that cooperatives often apply the same upgrading strategies despite very different business models and SWOT.

There are also many commonalities of SWOT among cooperatives but no clear-cut differences between conventional, organic and Organic-Fair trade certified cooperatives. The qualitative comparison of coffee gross margins among the cooperatives shows no clear income effect from participating in certified coffee production and

certified cooperatives. It indicates, rather, the dependence of gross margins on yield levels, the business model and the upgrading strategies of the cooperatives. Upgrading through certification seems only successful with a suitable business model and other upgrading strategies. LeMare (2008) examined the impact of fair trade on social and economic development: A review of the literature. The work explored the outcomes of Fair Trade for producers, artisans and their organizations. It asks the question, 'What happens to people who are involved in Fair Trade?' The work was organized around important aspects of development which Fair Trade seeks to influence, including market relations, institutional development, economic development and reductions in poverty, social development, gender equity and sustainable development. The results found that there is a significant impact on social and economic aspects of development, contributing to the capacity to improve and diversify livelihoods. Fostering sustainable commercial organizations is an important contribution of Fair-Trade networks. Both the enactment of partnership and the achievement of development goals requires continuous commitment, a variety of strategies and cooperation with other actors, such as government and non-governmental organizations.

Methodology

A descriptive research survey was adopted for the study. The descriptive research survey is a method used to generate primary data through the questionnaire and interview. Baridam (2002) posits that survey or descriptive research usually consists of methods of gathering data from usually a large number of respondents, who themselves constitute a sample. The study employed both primary and secondary. Primary data is obtained from the respondents through questionnaires and personal interviews as earlier stated. On the other hand, secondary data is generated for the study from research journals, scholarly publications in magazines, textbooks and Internet resources. The study was carried out at Enugu State Chambers of Commerce, industries, mines and Agriculture, which is situated in Enugu North Local Government Area. The population consists of all the entire members of the cooperative societies that participated in the Enugu state international trade fair within the period (2011-2016) under review and this totals 774. The sample size was obtained using Taro Yamane statistical tools. The research instrument was validated by an expert in the field of study. The data collected were analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23), inferential statistics of linear regression and chi-square. The researcher determines the sample size of the study using Taro Yamane statistical formula to calculate the desired sample size.

The researcher used a sample of the population because of the following reasons,

- I. The entire size of the population is large
- II. The resources (human and materials) available for the study are inadequate. The Yamane Techniques are adopted for this research work.

Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Population of the Study

e = Acceptable error limit/level of precision

Source: Taro Yamane

In this study, a 5% of acceptable error limit was used with 95% considered as the influence margin. The entire number of populations is 774, comprising all the members of cooperative societies that participated in the Enugu state international trade fair from 2011-2016

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{774}{1+774(0.5)^2} \\
 &= \frac{774}{1+774(0.0025)} \\
 &= \frac{774}{1+1.935} \\
 &= \frac{774}{2.935}
 \end{aligned}$$

= 263.7

= 264 members

The sample size of the study is Two Hundred and Sixty-Four (264) respondents from the area of study. However, ten cooperative societies were chosen for time and logistics. The computed data for this study will be analysed using liner regression

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Number Distributed	264	100.0
Number Returned	253	95.8
Number Not Returned	11	4.2

Source: Fieldwork 2017

In the table above, 264 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 253 were returned, and 11 were not returned. Thus given a 95.8% the return

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Male	103	40.7
Female	150	59.3
Total	253	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2017

Table 2 shows the gender of the respondents. 103(40.7%) of the respondents are male while 150(59.3%) of them respondents are female. This implies that the majority of the respondents are female.

Table 3: Age Of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 25yrs	44	17.4
25 – 34yrs	103	40.7
35 – 44yrs	46	18.2
45 – 54yrs	31	12.3
55yrs and above	29	11.5
Total	253	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2017

Table 3 shows the age of the respondents. It shows that 44(17.4%) of the respondents are less than 25 years. 103(40.7%) are within the range of 25-34years, 46(18.2%) are within the age of 35-44years. 31(12.3%) respondents are 45-54years while 29(11.5%) of the respondents are 55years and above

Table 4: Marital status of respondents.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Single	70	27.7
Married	137	54.2
Divorced	33	13.0
Widowed	13	5.1
Total	253	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2017

The table above shows the marital status of the respondents. 70(27.7%) of the respondents are single while 137(54.2%) are married. 33(13.0%) respondents are divorced and 13(5.1%) of the respondents are widowed. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are married.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

- I. H₀: There is no better-quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.
 H₁: There is a better-quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. The error in the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.761 ^a	.579	.577		.66834	.080

Source: SPSS version 23

Table 6: ANOVA^a

Predictors: (Constant), Trade fair

Dependent Variable: agricultural cooperative products

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	153.994	1	153.994	344.750	.000 ^b
	Residual	112.117	251	.447		
	Total	266.111	252			

Source: SPSS version 23

Table 7: Coefficients

Dependent Variable: agricultural cooperative products

Predictors: (Constant), Trade fair

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.716	.084		8.552	.000
	Trade fair	.643	.035	.761	18.567	.000

Source: SPSS version 23

Result Summary

R = .761; R² = .579; F = 344.750; T = 18.567; DW = .080

Interpretation of the Result

A linear regression analysis is conducted to ascertain the best quality of agricultural products traded at the trade fair. The result shows that there are the best quality agricultural products traded at the trade fair (R- coefficient = .761). The R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 57.9% of the variation of best quality of agricultural products can be explained by trade fair with no autocorrelation as Durbin-Watson (.080) is less than 2. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of about .66834. The regression sum of the square 153.994 is more than the residual sum of the square 112.117 indicating that the variation is due to the kind of agricultural products produced by the agricultural cooperatives. The F-statistics = 344.750 shows that the model is significant. The extent to which trade fairs affect the sales generation of agricultural products with a .761 value indicates a positive significance between a trade fair and sales generation of best quality product of agricultural cooperative products which is statistically significant (with t = 18.567) and p = .000 < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted accordingly.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no source of producing the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.
 H₂: There is a source of producing the best quality product of agricultural cooperatives products at the traded fair.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. The error in the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.916 ^a	.839	.839	.39017	320

Source: SPSS version 23

Table 9: ANOVA^a

Predictors: (Constant), Trade fair

Dependent Variable: Sources of Agricultural Cooperative Products

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	199.537	1	199.537	1310.752	.000 ^b
	Residual	38.210	251	.152		
	Total	237.747	252			

Table 10: Coefficients

Dependent Variable: Sources of Agricultural Products

Predictors: (Constant), Trade fair

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.474	.050		9.565	.000
	Trade fair	.746	.021	.916	36.204	.000

Source: SPSS version 23

Result Summary

R = .916; R² = .839; F = 1310.752; T = 36.204; DW = .320.

Interpretation of the Result

A linear regression analysis is conducted to examine the sources of the best quality agricultural products traded in the trade fair. The result shows that there are several sources of best quality agricultural products traded in the trade fair (R- coefficient = .916). The R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 83.9% of the variation in the sources of the best quality of agricultural products can be explained by trade fair with no autocorrelation as Durbin-Watson (.320) is less than 2. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of about .39017. The regression sum of the square 199.537 is more than the residual sum of the square 38.210 indicating that the variation is due to chance. The F-statistics = 1310.752 shows that the model is significant. The extent to which agricultural products with a .916 value indicate a positive significance between a trade fair and sources of the best quality agricultural products which is statistically significant (with t = 36.204) and p = .000 < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted accordingly.

Discussion of Findings

- i. There is a better quality of agricultural products traded in the trade fair produced by the cooperative society. The result revealed (r = .761; f = 344.750; t = 18.567; p = .00). The linear regression sum of the square is 153.994 more than the residual sum of the square 112.117 which indicated, that the variation is due to the kind of agricultural products produced by the agricultural cooperatives. The F-statistics = 344.750 shows that the model is significant. The extent to which trade fairs affect sales generation of agricultural products with a .761 value indicates a positive significance between trade fairs and sales generation of cooperative products which is statistically significant (with t = 18.567) and p = .000 < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted accordingly.

- ii. There are several sources of producing the best quality Agricultural products traded in the trade fair. The result revealed ($r = .916$; $f = 1310.752$; $t = 36.204$; $p = .00$). The linear regression sum of the square is 199.537 more than the residual sum of the square 38.210 indicating that the variation is due to chance. The F-statistics = 1310.752 shows that the model is significant. The extent to which agricultural products with a .916 value indicate a positive significance between a trade fair and sources of the best quality agricultural products which is statistically significant (with $t = 36.204$) and $p = .000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted accordingly.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn; trade fair is an effective promotional strategy for promoting agricultural cooperative products in the Enugu State of Nigeria. The study thereby concludes that there is the best quality of agricultural products produced by the Cooperative society traded at the trade fair and they are several sources of producing the best quality of agricultural products produced by the cooperative society traded at the trade fair.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher gave the following recommendations:

- i. Agricultural Cooperatives society should enable strategies and better ways of coming up with the best quality of agricultural products at the trade fair.
- ii. Agricultural Cooperatives society should enable to search for the right source of producing the best quality agricultural products.

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